



**Townsville  
Flexible Learning Centre**  
22-26 Ingham Road  
West End 4810

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2013**

This Annual Report for 2013 is published to provide information about the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre for parents/carers, young people and other interested parties. This report contains the detail mandated by the Commonwealth and State Governments and Edmund Rice Education Australia reporting requirements.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Townsville Flexible Learning Centre commenced operation in 2006 and in 2013 is part of a national association of nearly fifty schools which includes fourteen flexible learning centres and attached outreach programs and nine main stream schools in Queensland.

The distinctive education provided to all students is described in, *The Charter: A Proclamation of an authentic Expression of Edmund Rice Education as Applied to Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition*. This can be viewed on line at <http://www.erea.edu.au/about-us/charter>.

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is a co-educational Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition. In 2013, it is one of four Flexible Learning Centres operated by the Xavier Flexi Schools Network under the Governance of Edmund Rice Education Australia - Youth+. Attached to the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre are two mobile programs. The "It's Up 2 U" Outreach Program and the Bridge Program which focus on the Upper Ross area.

The philosophy of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre draws on the spirit and vision of Edmund Rice Education (the Christian Brothers). It has a clear commitment to social justice and stands in solidarity with disadvantaged people of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds. The philosophy also has a practical focus, based in the application of four core principles of "Respect" (for self, others and environment), "Safe and Legal" environment, "Participation" (have a go) and "Honesty" (being fair dinkum) among all participants of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre. This is evident in the way the organisational culture and practices are shaped through the application of these principles. In essence, the principles establish a "common ground" among staff, young people and parents, a collective forum, where the means to resolve conflict, negotiate learning, recognise rights, responsibilities and consequences are modelled and explored, both within the group, and individually and as members of the broader community.

The aim of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is to respond to the complex needs of disadvantaged young people who have been marginalised from mainstream education. The school achieves its aim by building honest and authentic relationships with young people and their families, supporting and celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each individual young person.

### **Future Outlook**

The 2008 Melbourne Declaration on the Education Goals for Young Australian's states that "Australian Governments commit to working with all school sectors to

- 'Close the gap' for young Indigenous Australians
- Provide targeted support to disadvantaged students
- Focus on school improvement in low socioeconomic areas".

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre works with young people who are vulnerable and experience a complexity of inter-related needs. As discussed above, participation and retention are key elements in the philosophy of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre and the development of moral reasoning through the application of the four principles prepares students for responsible citizenship. The learning experiences also build self-confidence and esteem in students, promote an optimistic view of their potentialities and future, and assist them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life.

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre offers an inclusive and non-discriminating learning community to young people, who for a variety of reasons, are marginalized from mainstream education. Young people are enrolled from both genders, from a variety of language, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, with particular sensitivity to Indigenous culture, and from backgrounds of socio-economic disadvantage. Young people are exposed to learning experiences that develop understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural values that constitute Australian society. Learning is focused around the individual needs of students and progress is carefully documented and monitored. Young people, in conjunction with their Teachers, Youth Workers and Education Support Workers, discuss career aspirations and draft learning plans with articulated pathways to further education and/or vocational education and training.

## **PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM**

Each young person at the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre has a Pastoral Care team. In the attached Flexible Learning arrangement/s, this team is made up of a Teacher and a Youth Worker who participate each day with the 15 young people who are enrolled.

At the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre site this team comprises their classroom Teacher for core literacy/numeracy, a community group staff member and at least one other significant worker chosen by the young person. The role of the team is to establish a close relationship to the young person, to monitor their progress, to advocate on their behalf, to provide advice, direction and support during difficult personal issues, and overall to support the young person to achieve their stated personal and educational goals. The role of this team is broad in scope, in-depth in its substance, and long-term in relationship. It includes:

- In-house mentoring and advocacy
- Supporting the young person and their families in times of emotional crisis or practical need
- Maintaining the close partnership between school, student and parent/carer
- Working in partnership with other agencies who are involved with students e.g. CYMHS, Dept of Communities, Youth Justice etc
- Supporting and mentoring young people who live independently
- Helping students to build capacity and resilience in social and emotional aspects of their lives
- Informally helping young people develop positive self-concept
- Supporting young people with issues of drug misuse and self harm
- Networking with other agencies such as Youth and Family Services to provide specialist assistance e.g. family mediation, counselling, anger management.

The Pastoral Care Program also includes the support work of the School Chaplain, the Parental and Community Engagement worker, the Youth Support Coordinator and access to the Network Child Protection Officer as required. .

The total 2013 enrolment of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre in full time equivalent students is shown below.

<b>Year Level</b>	<b>Students</b>
<b>8</b>	8
<b>9</b>	22
<b>10</b>	46
<b>11</b>	23
<b>12</b>	26
<b>Total</b>	125

## CURRICULUM

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre provides holistic learning experiences that address the social needs of students and promotes their emotional, cognitive, spiritual and academic development. The purpose of the learning experiences is to empower young people to take personal responsibility for their actions and learning, achieve greater autonomy and self-reliance and to engage in the transition to further education and/or employment.

Learning experiences address curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy, study of society and environment, vocational training, information technology, music and technology, outdoor education, Indigenous education, relational and spiritual education and science.

Subjects offered at various year levels include:

	<b>CORE</b>	<b>ELECTIVE</b>
<b>Year 8 - 10</b>	English Maths Information Communication Technology Sport and Recreation	Cultural Studies Science Art Manual Arts (Including Fibre glassing) Music Outdoor Education Flexi Farm Sport

	<b>Authority Registered Subjects</b>	<b>Certificate Courses</b>	<b>Electives</b>
<b>Years 11 - 12</b>	English Communication Prevocational Maths Social and Community Studies Recreation Studies	Certificate 1 Work Education	Cultural Studies Science Art Manual Arts (Including Fibre glassing) Music Outdoor Education Flexi Farm Sport

## OUTCOMES

A percentage greater than 100% indicates greater numbers of students enrolled in the upper or senior years than in year eight.

### APPARENT STUDENT RETENTION RATE

Senior Cohort Year	Year 8 Base	Year 12 at exit	Retention Rate %
2012	14	24	171%
2013	16	26	162.5%

### ATTENDANCE RATE

The average student attendance rate for 2013 was 76%. This number excludes students who terminated enrolment during the year or who were absent for extended explained absences.

Outcomes for Year 12 Students	
Total number of students who completed Year 12	7
Total number of Senior Certificates awarded	4
Percentage of Overall Position (OP) – eligible students with OP 1 – 15	0 %
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates and awarded a Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualification	42%
Percentage of students awarded Senior Certificates with OP – eligibility or awarded a Vet qualification	0%
Percentage of Queensland tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) applicants receiving an offer.	0%
The median score for OP - eligible students	NA

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS THAT PRODUCE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

In 2013, the following programs achieved improved outcomes for students at the Centre:

- The Museum of Tropical Queensland
- Reef HQ
- Thuringowa and Townsville Public Libraries
- Various work placement venues
- Cultural Studies Program
- Project Based Learning Program
- Young Men's and Young Women's Group
- Youth Health Week

- Adopt-a-Cowboy
- Transport Program
- Nutrition Program
- Flexible Learning Improvement Program
- Outdoor Education Program
- Music Program
- PaCE program
- Parents Program

## **YEAR 12 COHORT 2013 POST SCHOOL DESTINATION**

At the time of publishing this Annual Report, the results of the 2013 Year 12 post-school destinations survey, Next Step – Student Destination Report for the school were not available. Information about the post school destinations of our students will be posted to our website after 30 September, 2014. The following interim data reports the destinations of students as accurately as the school is able to ascertain at this point. (All data rounded).

<b>School Year – 2013</b>	<b>Number of Students in each category</b>	<b>Percentage of Students in each category (rounded off)</b>
<b>VET total ( Cert IV+ III, I-II, apprenticeship, traineeship)</b>	3	12%
<b>Working full-time</b>	3	12%
<b>Working part-time/casual</b>	3	12%
<b>Seeking work</b>	3	12%
<b>Not studying or in the labour force</b>	2	8%
<b>Returned to school</b>	15	58%
<b>Unknown</b>		

## CO CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Centre provides extensive opportunities for young people to participate in co curricular or non class room activities at their level and within their areas of interest. Participation is encouraged. The broad range of opportunities or choices for young people includes activities that are described as cultural, sporting, intellectual and or service related.

<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Sporting</b>	<b>Intellectual</b>	<b>Service</b>
Indigenous Culture Workshops	Outdoor Education Program	Outdoor Education Program	Police Citizen's Youth Club
Elders Visits	Interschool Rugby League matches	Indigenous Culture Workshops	Sorry Day
Art	Women's Basketball	Reef HQ	NAIDOC Week
Museum and Gallery Visits	Healthy Recreation Program	Woodwork Program	Woodwork Program
Sorry Day	Sport and Recreation Program	Fibre glassing and composites	Elders Visits
NAIDOC Week		Museum of Tropical Queensland	Women's Basketball
Mabo Day			Clean up Australia Day
Reconciliation Day			
ANZAC and Remembrance Days			
Harmony Day			

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2013**

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is committed to the ongoing professional development and formation of staff. This continues to enrich the educational opportunities provided for our young people and models to our young people the modern reality of life long learning. The following priorities were identified in the Centre's 2013 Operational Plan:

- New Staff Days – including student protection, Alcohol, Tobacco and other drugs training, introduction to trauma informed practice (1 Teacher)
- Whole Staff Days (7 Teachers)
- Student Protection training (1 Teacher) Update (7 Teachers)
- Operational Planning (7 Teachers)
- Edgeworks (1 Teacher)
- Reflective Practice (7 Teachers)
- Driving the Outlook (2 Teachers)
- Work Shadowing/Site Visit (2 Teachers)
- First Aid (2 Teachers)
- Narrative Therapy (7 Teachers)
- Emerging Principals Program (1 Teacher)
- Climbing and Abseiling (1 Teacher)
- Heavy Licence (1 Teacher)
- Harassment Referral Officer training (1 Teacher)
- Risktec Training (1 Teacher)

The total amount spent in 2013 on professional learning was \$37,526. The average amount spent per Teacher on professional development in 2013 was \$5,360.

## **THE SOCIAL CLIMATE OF THE CENTRE**

One hallmark of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre is the very real climate of compassionate care. This is expressed through the four principles of Honesty, Respect, Safe and Legal and Participation. These principles form the basis of all activities for staff and young people. A sense of common ground being shared by all at the Centre ensures that a positive, interactive and challenging environment exists. A sense of belonging and ownership has developed in both young people and staff since the Centre opened in 2006.

## **STRATEGIES USED FOR INVOLVING PARENTS / CARERS IN THE EDUCATION OF THEIR YOUNG PERSON.**

The Townsville Flexible Learning Centre recognizes that parents/carers are the primary educators of their young people and is very aware that a positive relationship with parents and carers that involves them in their child's learning will enhance the community. We also recognize that some of our young people live independently. Parents, carers and significant people in our young people's lives are welcome to attend the Flexible Learning Centre to take part in any of the daily activities at any time. They are also actively encouraged to be an active part of any organised Centre activities.

In 2013 these included NAIDOC Week activities, Mabo Day participation, National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Day, Health Week, Work Experience, Family BBQs, Parent Reporting Days, Big Breakfasts, Senior Celebration Night. Each term a family event is held to encourage parents, carers, support workers and families to form a relationship with the school and participate in their child's education.

In 2013 the Centre also hosted a Parental and Community Engagement Program (PaCE). The PaCE program had its own launch, open day and various workshops throughout the year. This Program allowed the Centre to increase the number of parents, carers and support workers engaging with the school community.

## STAFF

The staff members of the Townsville Flexible Learning Centre are highly qualified, experienced and generous group of professionals who consistently contribute more than would otherwise be expected both within the classroom and beyond. The distinctive skills / qualifications and experience of our staff include:

<b>Total number of teachers</b>	7
<b>Total number of Support staff</b>	9.5
<b>Total number of Staff</b>	16.5

<b>Teaching Staff Qualifications</b>	
<b>Diploma</b>	1
<b>Degree</b>	7
<b>Post Graduate Diploma</b>	
<b>Masters Degree</b>	1
<b>Doctorate</b>	
<b>Other</b>	

The average attendance rate for Teachers in the 2013 academic year was 91%. This figure reflects a low rate of sick leave among the staff. This figure does not include staff absent from classes attending professional development activities or who would have been replaced whilst on other forms of leave such as long service or maternity leave.

The teaching staff retention rate expressed as a percentage is 100%. This indicates the percentage of teachers who have continued service at the school from 2012 into 2013.

## INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

In recent times, substantial change has occurred in the provision of computer hardware and software for young people and staff. Professional development continues to enhance the skills of staff in this important facet of learning. Information management has become a critical literacy. Integration of technology within all learning continues to evolve across the variety the school's subject offerings. The Centre currently has two computer labs, a music technology area, a class set of laptops, and a class set of Ipads.

Each mobile Flexible Learning Arrangement (FLA's) has a set of Ipads to use when off site. These resources greatly assist in the engagement of young people.

## **SCHOOL REVIEW / SURVEYS**

In 2013 the Centre was part of a research project into Flexible Learning Options across Australia. A vignette showcasing the experiences of our Centre can be found at <http://dusseldorp.org.au/priorities/alternative-learning/case-studies/erea-youth-townsville-flexible-learning-centre/>.

The Centre also participated in Collegial Snapshot with Dare to Lead. The snapshot reviewed Indigenous Education in the Centre. The report was very positive and can be obtained from reception.

During 2013 the review into the reporting framework continued. The Centre and attached FLA's report using The Australian Core Skill Curriculum Framework and assess against accredited and non-accredited learning.

## **PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS FOR THE 2013 YEAR**

The Xavier Flexi Schools Network Board and Leadership recognize the value of strategic planning for the long term, sustainable development of programs, capital and human resources, the minimization of exposure to risks and to assist fidelity of operation to mission. Operational goals are set each year in consultation with staff. The following outlines achievements in reaching goals in 2013 articulated in the 2012 Annual Report.

- Through the development of the Flexi Farm the Centre has been able to continue a culture of environmental sustainability. In 2013 the Flexi Farm focused on wicking beds, the aquaponics system, herb spiral, and chicken coop.
- The relationship with the Northern Outlook continued in 2013 allowing the Centre to further develop the outdoor education program and work towards more independence. In 2013 young people and staff participated in a five day sea kayak, a five day canoe journey, a five day walk journey and a five day voyage on the South Passage. Two staff were also able to complete a training in 'Driving the Outlook' and one staff member began training in Climbing and Abseiling.
- The Centre has been able to further utilise the information and technology resources of the Centre through the integration of Ipads into the junior curriculum.
- Community partnerships were strengthened with Breakthru, Instep, Dance North, Queensland Youth Services, the Northern Outlook, QCP (Fibre glassing and Plastics) and the Townsville City Council.
- There is a strong community based on the four principles at the Centre.
- Attendance rate has been maintained as young people continue to choose to engage with the Centre with an enrolment of 125.

## 2013 MILESTONES

The most significant milestone for 2013 was the affirmative feedback received by external reviews. The Centre was visited by two external agencies in Dare to Lead and the Ian Potter Foundation. The Dare to Lead Collegial Snapshot provided a great endorsement of the focus on Indigenous Education and Indigenous perspectives at the Centre. The Ian Potter Foundation field work provided a vignette and a case study both highlighting and validating the practice of the Centre as a community of learners. The Centre also had staff produce and publish an article in the Australian Educational Researcher focusing on engaging diverse young people in conversations around science.

During 2013 the Centre was successful in its application for a Trade Skills Centre with partner school Ignatius Park College. This will allow young people to further their interest and study Certificate I in Construction and Certificate I in Manufacturing. It is anticipated that construction will begin in the second half of 2014.

The Centre successfully applied for and administered a Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program during the second half of 2013. The official opening of the program was a highlight bringing together Wulgurukaba, Bindal and Torres Strait community members to perform and share their culture and history with the parents and carers of the Centre. The program provided a number of positive schooling experiences for our parents and carers encouraging them to have a strong voice in the education of their young people.

Project based learning continued and was further developed to allow for greater inclusion in the Centre's accredited learning pathways. This ensured young people had the greatest possible opportunity to have their skills and knowledge developed and acknowledged within the schools reporting framework.

The journeys, both physical and mental, provided through the Outdoor Education Program were of great value. Young people and staff participated in a 5 day sea kayak, 5 day canoe, two 5 day walks and a 5 day voyage on the South Passage (Tall Ship). The growth in the young people and staff and the strengthening of the relationships between all who participated was immeasurable and extremely valuable to the larger school community.

As always the most significant milestone for the Flexible Learning Centre was providing a safe, caring, and educational environment for young people who for a variety of complex and sometimes challenging reasons sit outside the mainstream education environment. It was heartening in 2013 that this essential milestone was validated by two separate external agencies.

## **GOALS FOR THE 2014 YEAR**

In 2014 emphasis will be given to:

- Continue to develop and strengthen partnerships with community organisations
- Continue to develop a sense of community based on the four principles
- Evaluate and redesign the literacy and numeracy program
- Review the Information Communication Framework within the Centre
- Increase the availability of accredited learning pathways
- Provide an environment where young people feel empowered to take control of their lives and their learning
- Empower staff and young people to work together and share common ground
- Continue a culture of environmental sustainability
- Embed the Australian Core Skills Framework within the Centre
- Expand the capacity of the Centre to assist young people to transition including the exploration of a transitioning group
- Continue to develop the outdoor education program.

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